

# VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

JULY 2000

ONE DOLLAR







## Director's Column

William L. Woodfin, Jr

School's out for the summer and many youngsters will now have the opportunity to use what they have learned during the school year to more fully enjoy the outdoors and our natural resources. Each school year, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries employees spend many hours working with students across the state to help build their awareness of Virginia's wildlife resources. Just this past spring semester, students embarked on programs that will help them begin a life-long love of the outdoors and become our next generation of conservationists.

Recent programs included a trip on the James River to view one of, if not the largest, concentration of bald eagles on the East Coast. Hopewell Middle School students joined Department biologists and game wardens on a boating trip on the James to learn more about the eagles that make their home along the river.

In another part of the state, Law Enforcement Division personnel took Virginia's wildlife laws into the classroom with the Junior Game Warden program. This pilot program offers students a chance to learn more about the role of game wardens and the importance of protecting Virginia's natural resources. Third and fourth grade students from New Life Christian Academy took classes this past spring to enhance their angling

skills and to increase their knowledge about boating and hunter safety. Classes were designed to be informative and fun. In addition, the program addresses several areas of the Standards of Learning.

Over the years, the Department has been an active supporter of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts by co-sponsoring many outdoor events with them. In this issue of Virginia Wildlife, outdoor writer Emily Grey shares her experience spending a weekend with girls from across the region at the Girl Scout Wildlife Weekend. Volunteers taught 27 classes over

the weekend, offering everything from caving to water safety.

We look forward to continuing these partnerships and educational programs. Our staff and volunteers will tell you that the joy we feel participating in outdoor activities gets even better when we share it with our young people. It is our hope that the youngsters we spend time with in the classroom, in workshops or in scouting programs feel a connection with the outdoors that stays with them not only into the summer, but for many years to come.



Top: Students from Hopewell Middle School join VDGIF biologists and game wardens for a sight-seeing tour of American bald eagles along the James River. Photo by Ron Messina.  
Above: With the help of game warden Scott Naff, enthusiastic students from the New Life Christian Academy recently took part in the Junior Game Warden program. Photo by Lee Walker.

### Mission Statement

To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fisheries resources; to protect populations of all species; to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fisheries, boating and related outdoor recreation; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing.

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*Whenever the weather looked promising I arrived at the blind just before dawn to set the remote camera. I wanted to capture an osprey landing on the nest with a beautiful sunrise behind it, so depending on wind direction (birds land and take off into the wind) and a cooperative dawn, I tried day after day to get the image I had in my mind. This was the best I could get after more cloudy sunrises, non-firing flashes and uncooperative osprey than I care to admit. Using a Canon F-1 camera, a 17mm lens and adding a Vivitar 283 flash I was able to capture this unusual shot of an eight and a half week old fledgling returning to its nest with a fish. Phew!*  
©Lynda Richardson. See story on page 4.

# VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

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*Dedicated to the Conservation of Virginia's Wildlife and Natural Resources*





Taloned Toes and

story and photos  
by Lynda Richardson

Summer is upon us and with the heat comes thoughts of cool water and lazy sunny days on the river fishing, boating, and sightseeing. Images and sounds of gulls drifting lazily overhead and the occasional osprey sailing by with a fish are all part of the river experience. The osprey had always captured my attention and many moons ago I decided to look closer at their daily lives. Originally starting as a personal project, my work on osprey eventually became an official assignment for *National Wildlife* magazine. Since then, my osprey photographs have appeared in numerous publications throughout the United States and Europe. I thought it would be fun to look back now and share how I photographed these beautiful birds of prey. Hopefully, this article will inspire you to take on a personal project as well.

Unless otherwise noted, all images were shot using a Canon T90 35mm camera, a 500mm f4.5 lens and Fuji 50 slide film. □



**Left:** Enjoying a day on the Rappahannock River with friends provided the opportunity to capture the perfect osprey scenic I was looking for. Hand holding a 300mm f.2.8 lens I shot this colorful scene at 1/125th at f5.6.

**Above:** Here's a look at what I called Blind #1, my main shooting blind. The blind was built and positioned over the space of just a day. I was able to place it within 20 feet of the nest, the reach of my longest lens.

When placing blinds you must be extremely careful not to disturb the animals you are trying to photograph.

To position the blind I moved it closer and closer over the space of a day, constantly watching the reaction of the osprey family. It is important that once a blind is placed near a nest that you observe the chicks being fed before you leave it. If the adults do not return to the nest with food within a reasonable amount of time it is important to move the blind far enough back, away from the nest, so that the adults will again become comfortable. Then, try again the next day to slowly move it closer. Remember, your subject's welfare is more important than any photograph!

# a Hooked Nose:

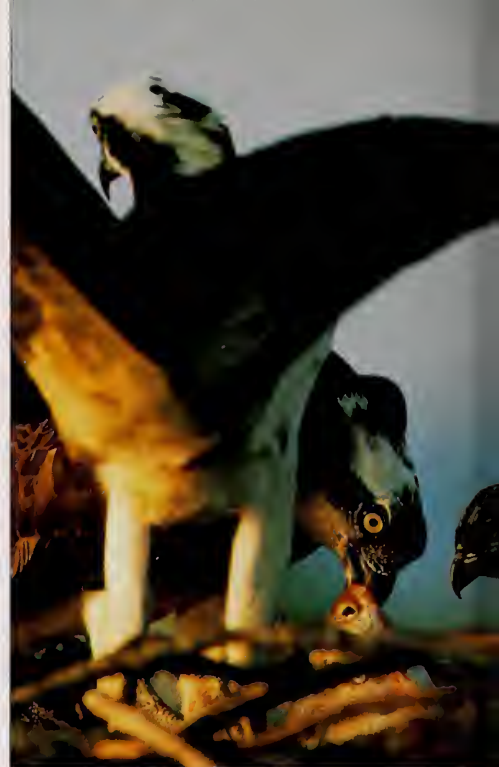
## *A Photographer's Summer With Osprey*





**Above:** A remote camera sometimes gives you images you'd never get otherwise. I clamped a "Bogen Magic Arm" to the side of the nest and attached a Canon F-1, 35mm camera with a 24mm lens and motor drive. Using a 25 foot cable release I triggered from the blind, I was able to take a lot of neat shots of the adults returning to the nest. Shot with a Canon F-1 camera and a 300mm f2.8 lens at 1/125th at f11.0.

**Right:** One of the most important things you always try to capture on film is behavior. Here the male osprey, foreground, has just handed over the evening catch to his mate. Normally he eats the head of the fish before he brings it to the female but this time, for some reason, he didn't. I really like this shot. I like how the male's head turns to fill the dead space at the top and his wing frames the female as she takes the fish. I also like seeing the chicks watching nearby. The setting sun provided a nice bit of color to the image. Shot at 1/125th at f5.6.



**Below:** Some of the young were more aggressive than others and as they grew from small chicks to fledglings you





could see the changes in their behavior and personalities. These fledglings are about six to seven weeks old. Shot at 1/250th at f8.0.

**Right:** The air was heavy and oppressive as I roared in my blind watching the motionless female osprey and her sleeping young. As the day wore on, the wind began to pick up and I began to cool off a bit. The female osprey also enjoyed the breeze and she fluffed her feathers to catch a little relief herself. It was a funny sight and I almost fell out of the back of the blind trying to capture it! No recorded exposures but probably shot at 250th at f8.0.



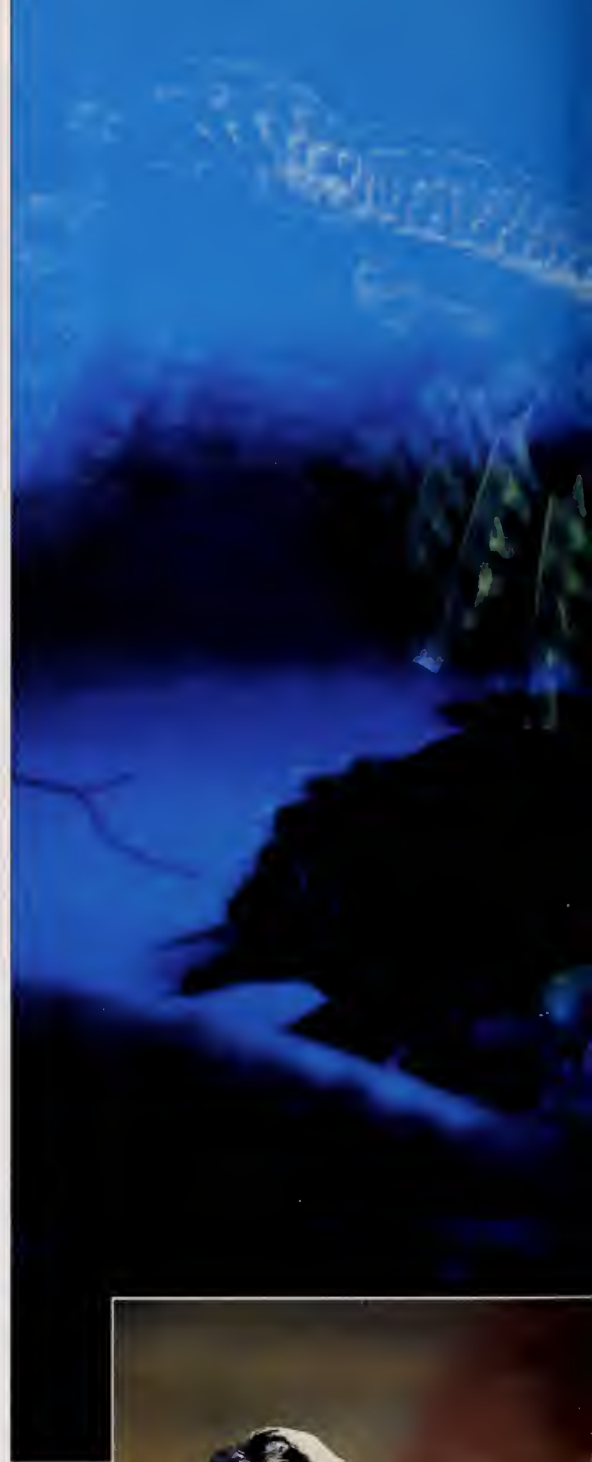
**Right:** Working 15 hours a day in a blind was not uncommon, so naps were a daily event for both the ospreys and me. My "house on the river" had full length inflatable mattresses and a cooler so life was great!





**Top:** An annoyed female osprey makes her feelings known as I check her nest for chicks. She was so close I shot this image with a Canon 200mm f 2.8 lens on Kodachrome 64 slide film. I think the exposure was 1/250th at f5.6.

**Above:** As the young osprey got older, they failed to realize that they were now as big as their mom. This caused a lot of confusion when they tried to find shade from the hot sun. The female continued to try and shade them, but after being knocked out of the nest several times, she gave up and rested nearby until her family left the nest. Shot at 1/125th at f11.0.







**Left:** Kicked out of her nest by her nearly adult charges, the female dozed nearby. It was quite a sight to watch her nod off, head slowly falling forward or backward, then suddenly waking before she fell off the pipe. Shot at 1/125th at f5.6.

**Above:** I wanted to try something different. From past experimentation I learned that you could shoot Tungsten film outdoors and create an eerily, beautiful blue sky...in fact, the whole image would be a cobalt blue! I wanted to shoot an evening scene without the normal boring black sky behind so I thought Tungsten film was the way to go. Since I didn't want everything blue I used a fill flash covered with a CTO (dark orange) gel. That color corrected everything to normal that the flash

covered. I chose to shoot at dusk, waiting for the lights of the ships in the background to come on. Then, I snuck alongside the nest and stood quietly near the osprey fledglings. They were used to me by now, so I waited for them to do something interesting. One youngster decided to test its wings and I had my shot. I used a Canon 24mm lens and Kodak 50 Tungsten slide film shot at 15th of a second at f5.6 with a Vivitar 283 flash gelled CTO.



# Fat Cats on

by Ken Perrotte

**J**ust about any Friday night at dusk during the sultry days of summer, you'll find the blues masters tuning up for another weekend jam session on the Rappahannock River down around historic Port Royal. Their favorite song begins with a solid thump followed by the singing of 20-pound test line zipping through the air and water.

Brian has been at this a long time and, like many grizzled veterans, he's gone through too many livers to count. Joey likes to bring along some home brew, the funkier he can whip

up. The ingredients are secret, of course, but the unmistakable smell of rotting cheese seems to stand out. Doug is one of the leaders, playing a mean Penn reel tuned with live eel. Together and individually, they are part of an emerging culture that thrives on the rush they get when they yank a giant blue catfish from the river's depths.

The Rappahannock River's reputation for producing such monster cats is becoming legend. An outstanding catfish fishery from the fall line in Fredericksburg to well past Tappahannock, Port Royal marks the hotspot.

## Worth the Drive

The Rappahannock has long been known for its scenic value. Now, with the emergence of the massive catfish, it routinely pulls anglers from hundreds of miles away. They all seek an encounter with Port Royal's own version of "Beauty and the Beast."

Jerry and Cel Littlepage, of Gerards Town, W. Va., commute nearly every week in the warmer months. Their daughter Sue Best, and her husband Bob, of Leesburg, often join them.



"It's a chance for Sue (whom mom describes as a 'beltway bandit') to get out and spend a little quality time with her parents," Cel laughs. "Three years ago someone recommended the Rappahannock and we just fell in love. There's nothing quite like a peaceful evening on the water, watching the sun rise in the morning, and the mist floating off the river."

Shawn Smith, of Chesterfield, drives over the James River to fish in the Rappahannock because he likes its overall quality. As a boy, he used to fish the river around Tappahannock with his father. Coolers full of fish in the two-four pound range were the norm. "I think the Rappahannock is more beautiful, quieter, and cleaner than the James is, plus there's not nearly as many people buzzing around on jet skis," he explains.

Fishing for catfish in the dog days of summer is best practiced at night, when temperatures are cooler and fish feed more actively. A slight to moderate breeze is always welcomed to help fend off insects, which can be relentless when both air and water are flat and warm. Sitting in total darkness on a hot,

# the "Rap"

**Opposite left:** As the afternoon sun begins to set, contestants in a summer tournament move out from the dock at Port Royal Landing, fishing for miles on both sides of the Route 301 bridge for monster catfish.

**Left:** Doug Sanders, of King George, baits up with a live eel. Eels, crabs, and cut perch are excellent baits for catching big blue cats.

Daniel C. Pruden



humid night is an invitation for mosquitoes to an all-night, all-you-can-eat buffet. The Littlepages use a black light hung off the stern of their 17-foot boat. The small moths, mosquitoes, and other winged critters, thankfully, focus their attention there.

Brian Hall, another catfish enthusiast since boyhood, now runs after big blues on a customized pontoon boat named "Bleu Cat." As he snaps another six-inch length of eel onto the oversized hook, he reminisces about how far he's come in the sport.

"I used to take my mother's nylon stockings without telling her. I'd cut them up and use the pieces to hold the chicken liver when I was fishing for channel cats," he grins.

During one summer eve tournament, Hall lifts anchor at 1 a.m. and pushes down to a section of the river called Taylor's Flats, near a spot called the \$2 Hole, so named because the landowner traditionally charges \$2 a head to fish there. His handheld searchlight sweeps the shoreline looking for fallen trees stretching out and creating underwater structure. Three raccoons, also working the bank during the outgoing tide, freeze when the beam captures them. Brian resumes his search

of the water and the coons disappear.

Across the river, a group of young folks have a rowdy, campsite party going. A bonfire and blaring music accent the scene. The sleepy fishermen and the apparently beer-soaked campers exchange friendly greetings.

Hall's favorite blue cat fishing methods include going to a known honey spot, anchoring, and laying out as many lines as possible. His other favorite is a technique he calls "drop fishing." Using his depth finder, he tries to locate a big fish hanging out near the bottom. He'll

*The tidal  
Rappahannock  
River is quickly  
gaining a  
reputation among  
anglers as being a  
hot spot for  
big catfish.*

cruise over it against the current and then try to free-spool the baited line right in front of the catfish's whiskers. If the fish doesn't immediately nab the bait, he'll anchor and throw everything in the boat at the big cat.

Doug Sanders is one of the blue cat gurus on the Rappahannock. During February 1999 alone, he earned enough state citations, (for blue cats bigger than 20 pounds) to wallpaper a small bedroom. Almost all of his fishing is catch and release.

He grabs a slippery, live eel and begins cutting it into four to five-inch lengths for bait. Another live eel is attached to the hook and the tip of its tail deftly sliced away. As the surface of the water transforms into brilliant splashes of red and orange, reflecting the beauty of the day's

sunset, the six-ounce sinkers quickly take the offerings to the bottom of the 50-foot deep water. The rods rest secure in holders.

"I like my lines tight, can't stand a slack tide," Sanders said. "It's all personal preference. I know others who are out here all the time who like some slack in the line."

Crabs, smaller fish, and who knows what else is down in the dark deep depths pick at the bait making the rod tips dance. Eels make good bait, because they're not easily removed from the hooks by lesser fish or creatures. Doug sits back and relaxes, watching the full setup through his peripheral vision.

"Most times, when a big sucker takes it, it'll be a slow, steady bite. Sometimes, though, you'll get little warning. You'll look and that pole will be peeled over horizontal in the rod holder," Sanders explains. "When you set the hook, set it hard. You're not working a jerk bait for a little bass. You're trying to stick a big hook through the tough jaw plate of a huge catfish."

The fish will eat just about anything they find palatable. The whiskers (barbels) have tastebuds and smell sensors that help them find delectable meals in the dark or the mud.

## A New Breed of Cat

Chris Hicks sees thousands of fishermen come and go annually from his store at Hicks Landing, 3.5 miles west of Port Royal. He is definitely of the mind these new trophy seekers represent a different breed of cat—diehards to rival the fiercest bass competitor.

He recalls one fellow coming in late one afternoon, down to his last \$20. The angler said, "It's between going home and giving it to the wife or spending it out here." Bait, drinks, snacks, and other sundries later, he was shoving off for the night.

Hicks compares the catfish fishing's growth in popularity to that of



Sue Best of Leesburg flashes a smile as she proudly displays her prize catch. Background photo ©Dwight Dyke.

©Ken Perrotte



NASCAR racing. "Years ago, if you fished for catfish many considered you trash. Today, I've got doctors, lawyers, everybody coming out here to get into the action.

"It's almost getting too complicated," Hicks continues. "There's not much grabbing a bucket of worms or chicken livers and heading out in the jon boat anymore. Now I see \$30,000 boats, many center console setups, with high performance engines—the boat will be outfitted with 10 rods and reels, each costing a couple hundred bucks!"

Robey Gullede, manager of Port Royal Landing, believes bass fishing has leveled off somewhat, while catfish angling is taking off.

"It's an everyman's fish—catchable, available—plus the fact that it's very good table fare doesn't hurt. It is great fishing for youngsters. It gives them a chance to catch a couple fish and feed the

entire family—makes them feel like true contributing members. There is tremendous value in that," he opines.

One indicator showing catfish fishing has arrived is the new magazines devoted solely to the species. Plus, major fishing equipment manufacturers are designing product lines just for whiskerfish.

While it may be "everyman's fish," Gullede says not everyone can consistently bring in the citation-size (20 pounds)



©Ken Perrotte



©Ken Perrotte

*Above: Serious blue catfish anglers often construct special live wells to accommodate fish that can push 60 pounds or better. Plastic 55-gallon drums with ventilation holes for water circulation and large trap doors safely hold the fish, so that they may be released unharmed.*

*Above right: Doug Sanders, of King George, surveys the shoreline looking for landmarks as he prepares to set up in one of his proven hotspots for blue catfish.*





lunkers. "Anyone can luck into a big fish, but catching them consistently takes real expertise." Hicks agrees some anglers just want to catch something in the good eating size range, usually no more than a few pounds.

"The big fish people, though, approach it with a crazy passion. They're like kids going to their first dance, gung-ho and ready to roll. You hear them out on the river laughing, carrying on, and just having a super time. Just like hunting, it can be addicting," he laughs.

"The most notable thing the blue cats have brought to the river is the night fishing. Over the last 10 years, we're starting to see as many people out there at night as during the day," Hicks offers.

Gulledge likes the sport's flexibility. "You can make it a lot of work or you can make it very leisurely, day or night.

## Applied Science

Dean Fowler is the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' specialist in tidal river species. He sets up shop in the Williamsburg office. Ed Steinkoenig, fisheries biologist in Fredericksburg, dubs him the department's "catfish aficionado."

The blue cats, an introduced species in the 1970s, are transplants from the Mississippi River system.

"They're a big river cat. The habitat here seems to suit them quite well with perfect food sources—lots of gizzard shad and threadfins," Fowler says. "They also like river herring. Those are nice size morsels for cats 10 pounds and up."

In a blue catfish diet study (of fish up to five pounds), conducted with Virginia Commonwealth University, white perch also appeared as a food staple. Fowler explains this wasn't unusual. "The perch are abundant and the catfish are opportunistic predators." The study's pur-

pose was to assess the impact the big blues were having on state efforts to restore populations of American shad.

"Today, we probably wouldn't stock the blue cats because we couldn't be certain of the long term implications. More than likely they will slow the shad restoration, but not stop it. They're more of an impediment, but not a deciding factor," Fowler maintains.

Long-time catfish anglers see more of an impact on the blues' cousins, the channel cats. The bigger, more aggressive blues are taking over main stretches of river where the best chow is found and leaving channel cats the shallower creeks.

Viewed pragmatically, the fish are here, doing well, and attracting considerable angler activity. This horse has left the barn and Fowler seems ready to make the best of this new mix of species in the tidal rivers.

Biologists see no reason why state records won't continue to fall. The most current record comes out of the James River at 71 pounds, 12 ounces. New records, though, swim just under the surface.

Biologists commonly use electrofishing techniques to survey catfish populations. In electrofishing, a small electrical charge is applied in the water. This stuns, but does not kill or damage the fish. They float to the top for a brief period before recovering. Last year, biologists shocked up a 74-pounder near Port Royal. The fish can grow to freshwater leviathan proportions with records in Kentucky, for instance, exceeding 104 pounds.

"The current Virginia record fish was likely more than 15 years old," Fowler believes, "and growth rates are still very good as blue cats continue to find their river system niche."

Fowler's studies on the James reveal that catfish congregate in certain areas. "You can go some distances without seeing large fish, then round a bend and 'BOOM' you'll see hundreds ranging in size

from very small to 50 pounds or more," he says.

"They seem to congregate at sharp bends where there are steep dropoffs, some kind of irregular bottom and woody structure nearby. Old log pylons that once supported wharfs or other structures seem to attract the blues," Fowler observes.

He plans on beginning a detailed study of the Rappahannock this summer. Eventually he also wants to conduct telemetry studies on the blue catfish to learn more about their travel habits, daily movements, spawning locations, and the impact of weather.

## To the Scales!

The moon and darkness steadily give way to the first hints of daybreak. Birds along the shoreline stretch and call, baitfish bust the water's surface everywhere, chased by unseen predators below. Just after dawn, when the bass fishermen are just starting to ply the riverbanks with topwater plugs, the blues masters are hauling up anchors and heading for the docks, each anticipating the oohs and ahs of their jam session partners as they heft the night's catch to the scales.

"Fifty-nine pounds!" comes the verdict, after Doug's most humongous hog finishes moving the needle.

"That's a big fish."

"Just another day at the office," comes the reply as he drops the behemoth back into the drink. A wave and friendly "Catch you later..." bids adios to the disappearing dorsal fin. □

*Ken Perrotte is a writer living in King George, Virginia. He writes the outdoor column for the Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star, as well as outdoor articles for many other publications. His biggest catfish is a wimpy 10 pounds. When last seen, he was on the river near Leedstown, vainly trying to corral a live eel that had escaped to the floor of his boat.*



# Calling All Birds





# Could our fine, feathered friends help you become a better hunter or angler?

by Bruce Ingram

**B**efore an excursion down the James River last June, I did what I always do—check the Weather Channel for the latest forecast. The weather had been noticeably cooler the previous three days, and I had hoped that the series of summer cold fronts moving through the area had departed.

The morning forecast was not promising, however. The weather summary noted that the wind was from the northeast—a sure sign of a cold front, and the daytime high was not expected to top 70 degrees. Nevertheless, I felt that I could cope with the conditions, until I arrived at the boat ramp and saw a row of bank swallows sitting on a telephone wire.

"This is not good," I said, pointing up at the swallows as a friend and I began our trip. "Those swallows should be out chasing insects by now. I think the whole food chain has shut down and that the fishing will be poor this morning."

My buddy looked at me as if I had lost my mind. What, he questioned, do birds have to do with whether or not the fishing will be good? Four hours later, after we had combined to catch just two decent bass and we had witnessed very few fish of any kind feeding, my canoeing companion was ready to admit that just maybe those bank swallows had been on to something.

I strongly believe that birds of various kinds are not only indicators of fishing success, but that their presence—or absence—can also tell a sportsman a great deal about his success in Virginia's forests.

## Birds as Fishing Indicators

Several kinds of birds are marvelous indicators of whether such species as smallmouth and largemouth bass will be in an area. For example, smallmouth bass and birds, such as great blue herons, green herons, and belted kingfishers, share several common traits: they are all predators and they all consume minnows.

Water willow beds thrive along many of the state's rivers, often growing adjacent to shallow, rocky bottoms. Whenever I view great blue or green herons stalking the edges of water willow or espy a belted kingfisher perched on a snag above this aquatic grass, I know that the "fishing" will likely be good for both the birds and me. Smallmouth bass will be attracted to the minnows near the water willow just as the birds are.





On the Old Dominion's lakes, I regard the presence of ospreys as a very positive sign. For instance, ospreys prefer soft rayed fish, such as those in the minnow and shad families. Spot an osprey plunging feet first into an area numerous times over the course of a morning and you'll likely find largemouth bass feeding on those same baitfish.

On many of Virginia's western trout streams I associate several species of warblers with superb fish-

ing. The Louisiana waterthrush is a prime example. This species prefers shaded areas along brooks and ravines, especially if the water in those locales flows briskly along. If I am hiking along a trout stream and hear the musical whistles of the Louisiana up ahead, I become hopeful that some brookies also share the same area.

Hooded warblers are another songbird that thrives along upland rills. This warbler frequents heavily

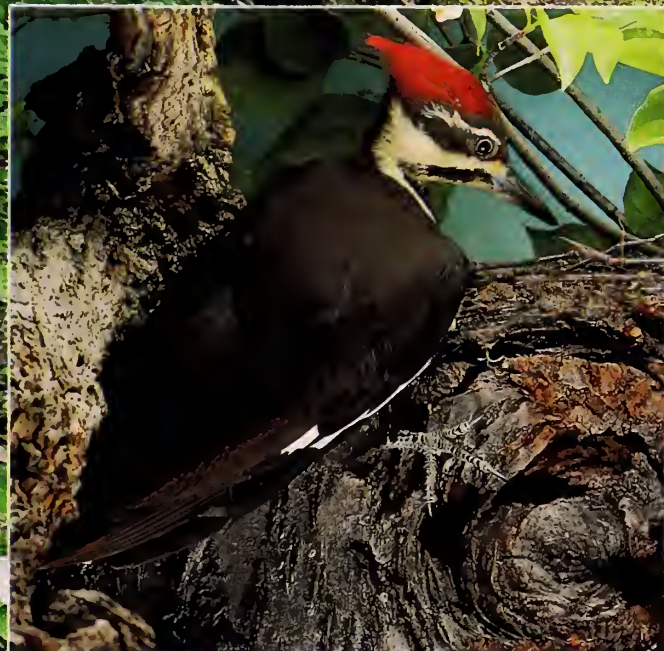
wooded areas, mountain laurel, and shady stream banks—exactly the kind of habitat that often offers prime trout angling. Hearken to the sound of the hooded's "tooe, tooe, tee-to" and limber up your long rod.

*Listen for the sounds of various songbirds, like the hooded warbler (Wilsonia citrina), as you float along Virginia's rivers, and chances are you may be rewarded with some fine fishing.*



©Bruce Ingram





## Birds as Hunting Indicators

If hunters could learn to recognize the appearance and song of just one species of bird, I would recommend that it would be the Carolina wren. This sparrow-sized songbird (reddish brown above and buff below) is definitely the “busybody, the nosy neighbor” among the creatures that inhabit the Commonwealth’s woodlands.

Many times I have been on a treestand and heard the “buzzy” sound of the Carolina’s alarm note (sort of a “chirrrr”). Get ready! A

**Top:** Learning the notes of the pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) can lead to successful spring gobbler hunts. ©Rob & Ann Simpson. **Right:** The alarming cry of the Carolina wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) is often a good indicator that an animal is approaching your area. ©Rob & Ann Simpson.





deer, turkey, squirrel, or even a bear may be on the way. This wren feels compelled to sound off when other creatures enter its territory.

Another game indicator is a blue jay. For instance, one early autumn morning I was scouting a Botetourt County woodlot where I often pursue squirrels and bowhunt for deer. I heard a series of the trumpeting whistles and twitters that blue jays utter up ahead. Arriving at the source of the racket (blue jays are no wood thrushes when it comes to making melody), I espied a flock of

jays flitting about in a massive scarlet oak.

This member of the red oak family was dripping with acorns, whereas most of the other oaks in the area had produced very poor mast crops. That autumn the hunting for the squirrels and white-tails in the area was phenomenal. The game animals,

along with the jays, were all gorging on the scarlet oak acorns.

Spring gobbler enthusiasts would do well to learn the "cuk-cuk-cukcuk" of the pileated woodpecker. The Old Dominion's largest woodpecker, roughly the size of a crow, possesses a red crest and flashes white underwings in flight.

I first learned the importance of recognizing the vocalizations of the pileated many years ago while turkey hunting in the Jefferson National Forest. The morning had been lacking in gobbling when I heard the notes of the pileated. I listened closer and detected the faint sounds of a hen clucking every time the pileated sounded off—or was the pileated responding to the hen? In any event, I quickly made a loud cutting sound with a mouth call, and a gobbler issued his response.

Interestingly, over the past few years, turkey call manufacturers have begun to make pileated woodpecker calls, advertising them as great offbeat locator calls for gobblers, which they are. If your usual yelps, clucks, and purrs are not engendering a response, try the pileated woodpecker call to ascertain if there are any hens or toms in the vicinity.







©Maslowski Photo



©Bruce Ingram

**Top:** Blue jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) are easily identified by their loud calls. They like to feed on acorns, which can help lead you to key feeding areas of other animals.

**Above:** Fencerows attract a host of game and non-game animals.

Another way that songbirds can be game indicators is that prime songbird habitat can often be superlative game habitat and vice-versa. For instance, I own some acreage in Craig County where I have let the fencerows become quite overgrown on purpose. Those fencerows harbor excellent numbers of rufous-sided towhees, song sparrows, white-eyed vireos, and often a covey of bobwhite quail and some rabbits. Several acquaintances have admonished me to tidy up the place for "the sake of appearances," but the bobs, bunnies, and songbirds seem to like matters just fine.

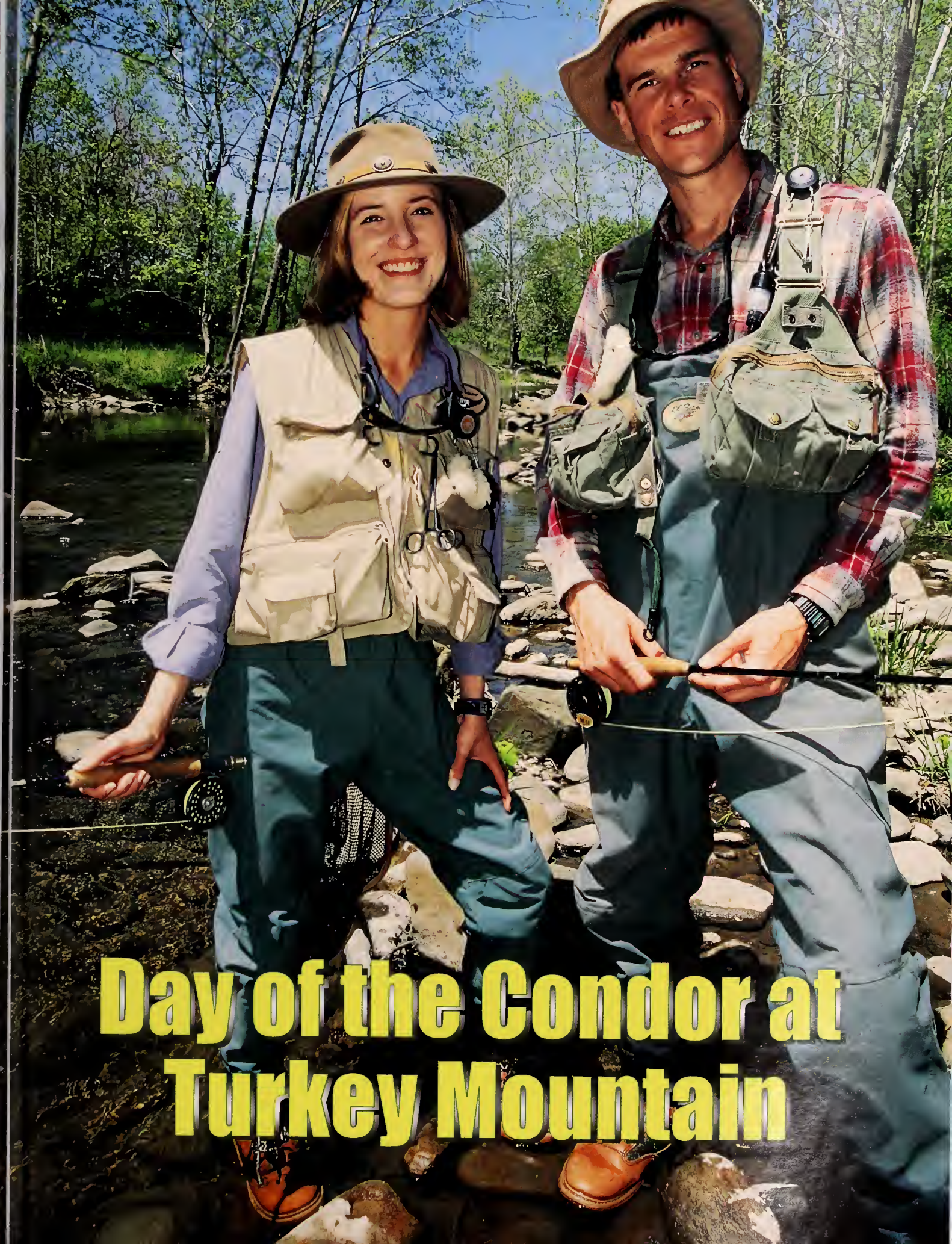
## Summing Up

Remember that fruitless fishing morning mentioned earlier in this story? Later that day, in the after-

noon, the wind shifted to being from the southwest, and my friend and I noticed bank swallows dipping close to the James' surface up ahead. Paddling closer, we saw a damselfly hatch taking place and the bronze-backs slashing about on the surface to take advantage of it. At a water willow bed to our right, two great blue herons were stalking the grass line; and on a sycamore-shrouded shoreline to our left, we heard an orchard oriole singing non-stop. And the smallmouth sport was superlative the rest of the afternoon. Indeed, with a little patience and a keen eye, birds can be excellent indicators on your next hunting and fishing trip in Virginia's woods and waters. □

*Bruce Ingram is a high school teacher, freelance outdoor writer, and photographer from Fincastle, Virginia.*





# Day of the Condor at Turkey Mountain





***Above:** Jim Hickey deftly guides the Achilles raft down the Shenandoah River, while his wife, Jenny, casts to waiting smallmouth bass. **Top right:** Jenny guided the author to this huge rainbow trout on the Thornton River.*





## It's a rough life, but somebody has to do it.

story & photos  
by King Montgomery

**T**he moving water tugged at my neoprene-clad legs creating a pleasant sensation that also reminded me I was out of my element. The creatures at home here are the trout, and the swift moving streams that flow out of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains are their home. Today I shared it with them, standing in the Thornton River in the shadow of Rappahannock County's Turkey Mountain. This section of the Thornton River, about two miles, was particularly loaded with rainbows and brook trout, thanks to the efforts of two dedicated riverkeepers: Jim and Jenny Hickey of Turkey Mountain Outfitters in Sperryville.

"Cast upstream and a little to the left and bring the fly along that current seam," instructed Jenny.

I checked the trees behind me and along the banks and figured I'd probably put a fly or two in them before the day was over. But for now, the dark olive beadhead woolly bug-



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*Jim Hickey gently removes a Condor fly from a nice smallmouth bass and released it into the Shenandoah River to battle another day.*

ger actually landed where I wanted it, and drifted gently along the stream.

Nothing.

"A little more to the right," Jenny whispered, and I could hear anticipation in her voice.

I did as told and all heck broke loose. The fish made several nice runs taking line each time, and on its penultimate surge, it almost ran between my legs. These Thornton River rainbows are strong. When the 20-inch trout slid into the landing net I could see it was beautifully colored, living up to its name as light

played along its flanks, reflecting the hues of the rainbow. The rainbow trout here are stocked by the Hickeys, and they join the native brook trout that have moved down from the mountain. This one had probably been here for several seasons. I released it gently, so it could live on for several seasons more.

## Virginia's Angling Couple

"The family that fishes together, stays together," is not a bad credo, and Jenny and Jim Hickey live by it. Jim met Jenny when he visited a friend at the University of Alabama where Jenny was a student. Jim, a graduate of Hampden-Sidney College in Farmville, Virginia, is a former wrangler and fishing/hunting guide in Wyoming, and also is a field editor for *Virginia Outdoor Weekly*, a newspaper in Charlottesville. After graduating from Alabama, Jenny fly fished and guided out West. She is also a graduate of the Orvis Western Rivers Guide School in Jackson, Wyoming. Not bad credentials for a young professional fly fishing couple looking at the lower side of thirty.

Jim and Jenny run Turkey Mountain Outfitters, located on a 172-year old working farm on the Thornton River below Turkey Mountain, which is really a big hill. Professional and personable, they are an admirable team always aiming to please their clients.

In the spring, the Hickeys teach and guide on the Thornton River, and lead walking trips to the native brook trout streams of the nearby Shenandoah National Park. On overnight fishing trips to the park, anglers can wet a fly on out-of-the way, peaceful, and near pristine brookie streams. From spring through fall, the Hickeys also offer float trips on the nearby South Fork of the Shenandoah River and on the upper James River in a self-bailing Achilles raft, a comfortable platform for casting to smallmouth bass.

The Thornton River can be fished in the winter too, but the Hickeys take a three or four week chunk out

of Virginia winters to host and guide small groups of anglers at Las Torres Lodge in Patagonia, Chile. Here they fish two rivers and a lake, including the fabled Cisnes River, for huge brown trout. For fall 2000, the Hickeys have added a week hosting a trip to Allen's Diamond Four Ranch in Wyoming for some back country fishing by horseback. Tough job, but someone has to do it!

## Day of the Condor

The morning's haze still hung over the South Fork of the Shenandoah River, while the sun slowly cleared the Massanutten Mountain. I sat in the front seat of Jim and Jenny Hickey's 16-foot Achilles raft. A green heron perched on a protruding stick in midstream, while his great blue cousin prowled the shallows on the far shore. We were all looking for fish.

"This is the Condor," said Jim, and he took his hand from an oar long enough to give me an unlikely looking surface fly.

I tied on the blue foam, hackle, peacock herl, Krystal Flash, and calf-tail concoction, stood up, and cast to the moving water along the bank. The gentle movement of the raft matched the flow of the current so the drift of the fly was generally long and drag free. The fly disappeared in a wink and a "bloop," and I set the hook to 16 inches of smallmouth bass, the first of five that size or better that attacked Hickey's Condor during the morning.

"I tied it originally for the big brown trout in Patagonian rivers," explained Jim, as I released another smallmouth.

Jim recently sold the fly pattern, which works great on Virginia's smallmouth and largemouth bass to Brookside Flies of Denver, Colorado. It is now in fly shops across the nation, including many throughout the Old Dominion. We caught some huge redbreast sunfish and bluegill with it as well.

After nine or 10 fish, the calf's hair wing wore off of my Condor, but I declined to replace it with a new one





*Jenny Hickey (right) guides Elizabeth Grant, an attorney from Annandale, on the Thornton River for a day of trout fishing.*

that Jenny offered. This one was working quite well, thank you, so I stayed with it. The numerous sun-fish and bronzebacks took a toll on my Condor, but I still have it and use it to this day. (And I'm not a bit superstitious.)

"The fly works great when it drags in the current at the end of the drift," said Jim. But mine seldom made it to the dragging stage because of the action along the way from the hungry fish. The fly does look like our blue damselfly and dragonflies that populate most Virginia lakes, streams, rivers, and ponds

from spring through fall. So don't let its Patagonian ancestry deceive you; the Condor works great in Virginia too.

Despite their love for the American West, Jim and Jenny settled in Virginia. The great diversity of public accessible streams and rivers, supplemented by leased and managed private waters throughout the state, serve to provide quality outdoor experiences for us all. While the Hickeys have the luxury to visit and fish in exotic places, they've found that there's no place like home. □

*A frequent contributor to Virginia Wildlife, award-winning freelance writer King Montgomery lives in Annandale, Virginia.*

Jim and Jenny Hickey can be reached at (540) 987-9134 or visit their Website at: <http://www.turkeymtnoutfitters.com>.

The Hickeys work with the Thornton River Fly Shop in Sperryville, (540) 987-9400, and with The Shenandoah Lodge in Luray, 1-800-866-9958.

Beau Beasley is Virginia's representative for Brookside Flies, (703) 793-1159.

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Girl Sco



# uts Wild Weekend

story and photos  
by Emily Grey

Girl Scouts from around the state are given a chance to experience some outdoor opportunities that will leave lifetime impressions.

**O**n April 1st, 2000, Hanover County's Pamunkey Ridge Camp was the idyllic setting for a beautiful "foolproof" day of fun, frolic, and focus. Approximately 300 carefree girls, aged 12 to 17, swung on high ropes, petted nonvenomous snakes, and performed other daring feats.

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) and the Commonwealth Girl Scout Council of the U.S.A (GSUSA) co-sponsored the captivating event, appropriately called Girl Scout Wildlife Weekend. Diverse experts volunteered to teach 27 different classes on the 246-



acre expanse of woodlands, lakes, and open fields.

"The bond between the Department and scouting is a natural," explains Lt. Ken Conger, a VDGIF game warden, who helped coordinate the occasion. "A weekend like this expands on the fundamentals of outdoor skills and recreation. It broadens scouts' interests in wildlife and the environment by exposing them to new activities and provid-

***Left:** Young would-be spelunkers were given instructions on the art of belaying, an essential part of any safe caving experience.*

***Above:** Hands-on experiences make the bond between the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and scouting a natural, which is evident in the faces of these budding herpetologists, as they get up-close and personal with a corn snake.*





*Above: Fisheries biologists Ed Steinkoenig (left) and Price Smith (right) share information about specimens collected during a fish management class. Right: A Virginia falconer shows off his red-tailed hawk to an interested trio of girls.*

ing additional education in areas where they already have a basic interest."

"It's exhilarating!" exclaims Caitlyn Dronenburg, a sixth grader from Spotsylvania County. "I liked the turtles and snakes best."

Eighth grader Ashley McLeod and sixth grader Sara Sale, also from Spotsylvania County, particularly enjoyed the fly fishing and fish management sessions.

"We saw different types of fish," replies Ashley.

"And we got to touch and measure them," adds Sara.

"After last year's Boy Scouts' camporee, it was only natural to offer a similar event for the Girl Scouts," rationalizes Lt. Conger, also Boy Scout Master in Providence Forge, New Kent County. "Working with so many dedicated, expert Department co-workers and other vol-

unteers on a scouting event is one of the most enjoyable things I do in my career."

VDGIF Director, Bill Woodfin and Secretary of the Virginia Department of Natural Resources, John Paul Woodley, Jr., welcomed everyone to the day camp. The two state leaders toured various events in progress and watched as serendipity lit up eager young faces.

"This is a place to learn new things and talk with people I hadn't met before," says Joan Baker, a seventh grader from Woodbridge. "You learn how to compromise. For example, in backpacking we had to agree what to put into the pack."

"There are so many activities to







choose from," remarks Erin Hall, a Stafford County eighth grader. "I enjoyed biking best because I don't get to go a lot and this was a good opportunity."

From about 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and beyond, participants attended the following informal classes: Archery, Astronomy, Backpacking Basics, Birds, Building Bird Boxes, Camping (Leave No Trace), Canoeing/Boating Safety, Caving, Computer, Cycling/Mountain Biking, DGIF Resources, Dutch Oven Cooking, Early Native Americans, Falconry, First Aid, Fish Management, Fly Fishing/Fly Tying, Hunter Safety/DART Machine, K-9 Search and Rescue, Map and Compass, Media, Photography, Plant Life, Survival, Tracking, Wildlife Management, and Wildlife Law Enforcement.

At noon, the girls relished wholesome pizza slices, cold drinks, and

other goodies. Some individuals camped overnight at the peaceful site.

"There are real cabins here and no tents," volunteers Laura Fallon, an eighth grader from Williamsburg. "It's really nice. There are lots of hands-on activities, and the food is good."

"I've learned a lot in a fun way," states Whitney Booker, a seventh grader from Chesterfield County. "It was cool seeing how the search and rescue people train and reward their dogs."

"Climbing was the most fun because I like the challenge of something new," declares Tina Fleming, a Mechanicsville sixth grader.

"At Wildlife Weekend, we witnessed the power of girls together as they explored natural resources, discovered new career possibilities, tested their skills, and committed

*Game Warden Rebecca Collins answers questions about her exciting career and helps in the identification of various wild animals.*

themselves to care of our environment," observes Lisa Kroll, Outdoor Program Specialist for the Commonwealth Girl Scout Council. "Girls made fly fishing lures, used a compass and map, paddled canoes, spied the rings of Saturn, and discovered wilderness survival skills. In addition, as an event for Cadette and Senior Girl Scouts, many of the young women enjoyed meeting other teen Girl Scouts."

The Girl Scouts have come a long way since this writer was a member in the 1960s. Besides hiking, crafts, and domestic skills, today's GSA learn multifarious trades and pastimes.

Exposing young girls to nature and outdoor professionals can make



a beneficial lifetime impression. Nowadays, this new generation can optimistically expect to be accepted and excel in any discipline. The Pamunkey Ridge experience united girl scouts from all over the Commonwealth. Jovial expressions, laughter, and numerous questions evidenced an extraordinary time by all.

"My friends and I usually don't get a chance to do all this stuff around school," explains Marissa Wilson, a Chester eighth grader. "This is education and fun all wrapped into one."

In the spring of 2002, the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts will team up for a coed phenomenon. Anticipation will mount as girls challenge boys in amicable outdoor competitions. □

*Emily Grey is a freelance writer from Virginia's Eastern Shore.*



To learn more about this upcoming event, contact:

Lt. Ken Conger  
VDGIF  
5806 Mooretown Rd.  
Williamsburg, VA 23188  
Office: (757) 253-7072  
Fax: (757) 253-4182  
E-mail:  
kconger@dgif.state.va.us

To inquire about the Girl Scouts in Virginia, contact:

Lisa Kroll,  
Outdoor Program Specialist  
Commonwealth Girl Scout  
Council  
7300 Hanover Green Drive  
P.O. Box 548  
Mechanicsville, VA 23111  
Phone: (800) 4 SCOUT 4 or  
(804) 746-0590  
Fax: (804) 746-3127  
E-mail: L\_Kroll@com-  
girlscouts.org



**Top:** Libby Norris, VDGIF Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) coordinator, demonstrates Dutch oven cooking to create cobbles, breads, and main dishes.

**Above:** Fly fishing and boating attracted a lot of interest among many who attended the co-sponsored Girl Scout Wildlife Weekend.





# Journal

## Write On Target

by Lee Watts

David S. Foulis writes via the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Website and asks "please provide the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) camping restrictions. Boy Scout Troop 979 is interested in camping and fishing in the Rapidan area, or other mountain areas."

The rules and regulations can be found on page 1 of our Wildlife Management Area Guide. "Primitive camping (no developed facilities) is permitted for up to 14 consecutive days unless otherwise prohibited. Camping is prohibited on or within 100 yards of any boat ramp or fishing lake."

The Departments WMA's are great places for camping, hiking, and wildlife watching, as well as hunting and fishing. Amelia and Chickahominy WMA's also offer shooting ranges for sighting in rifles and patterning shotguns. In addition, Amelia has a range where you can throw your own clays. Many scout troops use this area for merit badge training. Chickahominy also has a range for pistols. Both ranges are open from sunrise until sunset, except Amelia, which opens Monday at noon and Chickahominy is closed on Wednesdays.

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Wildlife Management Area Guide is available for \$5.00 through the mail. A map and brief description are provided on each of the WMA's listed in the guide. You can also download these maps from our Website at: <http://www.dgif.state.va.us/hunting/wma/index.html>

For detailed information concerning individual WMA's check with the local Regional Office of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Williamsburg - (757) 253-4180  
Forest - (804) 525-7522  
Marion - (540) 782-9051  
Verona - (540) 249-9360  
Fredericksburg - (540) 899-4169  
Richmond - (804) 367-1000

Have a question? Need a regulation clarified? Need to know more about what the Department does? Send your questions or inquiries to: WriteOn Target  
P.O. Box 11104  
Richmond, VA 23230-1104

You can reach us by calling (804) 367-9369 or via e-mail at: [WriteOn-Target@dgif.state.va.us](mailto:WriteOn-Target@dgif.state.va.us). □

## Virginia Outdoor Sportsman Show

Hunting season is just around the corner. What better way to get in the mood than to plan a trip to the Virginia Outdoor Sportsman Show, August 11-13 at the Show Place on Mechanicsville Turnpike in Richmond.

The Virginia Outdoor Sportsman Show, which is sponsored by the Virginia Deer Hunters Association, is the largest outdoor show of its kind in Virginia. Over 200 booths full of hunting supplies, rifles, muzzleloaders, shotguns, bows, tree-stands, hunting clothes, and accessories will be on display.

This is your chance to see and participate in The Virginia Deer Classic and The Virginia Gobbler Classic contests. Deer and turkey hunters from around the state bring their mounts. Some of the biggest

bucks and turkeys harvested in Virginia are displayed and judged in these prestigious contests.

If you enjoy hunting, fishing, or just like spending time in the outdoors, we invite you to spend time talking directly with wildlife biologists and law enforcement officials from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Trained professionals will also be available to answer all your questions and will also be there to help you buy your hunting or fishing licenses. The Department will also be displaying important information that will help make your next hunting or fishing experience a better one.

Hugh Crittenden, founder and promoter of the show and who owns Hugh's Taxidermy in Chesterfield County, said a record crowd of 17,000 people attended the show last year and he expects this year's show to be even bigger and better.

If you would like further information about the show, call (804) 748-7529 or visit their Website [www.sportsmanshow.com](http://www.sportsmanshow.com). □



## Back for More

Mrs. R. F. Cashwell, of Chesapeake, Virginia, sent *Virginia Wildlife* magazine a special photograph of an old family friend. The young man featured in the picture (above), is Mrs. Cashwell's grandson, Ryan, welcoming his fine feathered buddy,



a mourning dove, during the summer of 1999.

It seems the two became good pals last year after the mourning dove became a regular at the bird feeder. As a matter of fact, the dove became so comfortable with Mrs. Cashwell's efforts of attracting wildlife that Ryan and other family members had him eating out of their hands until it departed south for the winter.

This past March, after what seemed to be a longer than normal winter, Mrs. Cashwell was greeted with a springtime surprise. There, sitting at her bird feeder, was the same dove that had once again returned to be waited on hand-and-foot.

It goes to show you that sharing a little bit kindness is often never forgotten, no matter who you are. □



## Spring-Clean Up on the Smith River

by Lt. Karl Martin,  
Virginia Game Warden

The local chapter of the Smith River Trout Unlimited, with members from Virginia and North Carolina, gathered this past spring to do a little sprucing along their favorite trout stream. The Smith River, located in Henry County, has long been considered one of Virginia's finest cold water trout streams. Its ability for producing quality trout is recognized around the country and is unparalleled among trout streams in Virginia.

With trash bags in-hand, members headed out along the banks of the river picking up everything from bottles, cans, cardboard, plastic, and other small items. The group even

managed to remove two refrigerators from the riverbank. Lee Higginbotham, president of the club, said they are very active in the community and are proud of the work that they have done improving the environment. He added that the numerous cleanup efforts by the club and trout fishermen have helped to keep a friendly relationship among local landowners. A local landowner even commented that the clean up efforts along the river have been impressive and clearly a positive step toward improving relationships among landowners and users of this incredible resource.

If you haven't had a chance to fish the Smith River you may just want to give it a try. And, while you're there admiring its beauty, you can thank just one of the many conservation groups around the state that like giving back a little more than they take. For additional information on the Smith River, write for your free copy of *The Freshwater Fishing Guide*. Send your request to: The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Information Office. P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104. □

## Bruce's River

by King Montgomery

*The James River Guide: Fishing and Floating on Virginia's Finest*

by Bruce Ingram  
2000, Ecopress, 136 pages,  
paperback, \$11.95.

We are blessed with a number of beautiful, fertile, and accessible rivers in the Old Dominion. Interesting in their geology, diverse in fish and wildlife, and rich in history, Virginia's rivers are ours to enjoy. Bruce Ingram, from Fincastle, is so attached to one of those rivers that he has just published a book about it. His river is the James, particularly the upper reaches where the scenery, canoeing, and fishing are all great.

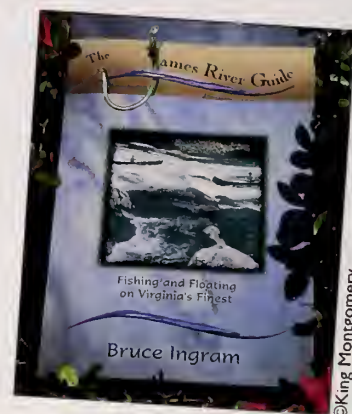
Bruce's guidebook takes the reader from the headwaters at Iron Gate, where the Jackson and Cowpasture rivers converge to form the James, to Maidens where the Route 522

bridge crosses the river. This stunning journey of about 170 miles excludes the 30 river miles influenced by the seven dams that have so adversely altered the river and the surrounding habitat.

After several tutorial chapters on natural history, fishing tactics and techniques, and information on canoeing the river, subsequent chapters take the reader paddle-by-paddle on stretches of the river from three to 12.5 miles at a time. For ease of reference, Bruce divides the James into three sections: the Headwaters (Iron Gate to Snowden); the Upper James (Lynchburg to Scottsville); and the Middle James (Scottsville to Maidens). He tells you all about each parcel of the river including put-in and take-out points, the best places to fish, tackle and techniques for catching smallmouth bass, panfish, and catfish, items of natural or historical interest, and how to navigate the riffles or rapids. He covers the best spinning lures and flies for all seasons.

Bruce Ingram is an angler, a bird watcher, a canoeist, a photographer, and a conservationist. A well-known outdoor writer, he has written for *Bassmaster*, *Fly Fisherman*, *Sports Afield*, *Blue Ridge Country*, *Virginia Wildlife*, and numerous other magazines.

*The James River Guide* is a must if you go to what Bruce calls "Virginia's River." It is available on <http://www.amazon.com> and <http://www.bn.com>. You can also order from Ecopress at 1-800-326-9272 or at <http://www.ecopress.com>. □







# Photo Tips

by Lynda Richardson

## So, You Want to Be a Wildlife Photographer? Part 2

In last month's column, we discussed learning all you can about your wildlife subjects and slowly collecting an assortment of gear. After you've picked your camera, what types of lenses might you be interested in? If you enjoy shooting close-ups of flowers or insects, consider a 100mm or 200 mm macro lens (around \$200-\$400, used). Be sure to ask if the lens comes with extension tubes. They usually do and you want these for closer focusing capabilities.

If you want to shoot larger critters, select the biggest and brightest telephoto you can afford. Starting with a good 300mm f4.5 or f2.8 if you can afford it (in the \$500-\$2500 range). If possible, locate a 1.4X teleconverter to fit that particular lens. It will turn a 300mm into a 420mm lens with minimal loss of sharpness. A 2X teleconverter will give you a 600mm lens but the loss of sharpness is too great for my taste.

After purchasing a dependable camera and lenses, invest in a good, sturdy tripod. Do not purchase a lightweight tripod or you will have trouble with wind vibration and camera movement. It's the one purchase you can use with any camera and it should last a lifetime! I use a Gitzo tripod and an Arca-Swiss ball head with quick release plates. The Arca-Swiss head is the smoothest maneuvering head I've found and the quick release plates (attached to different cameras or lenses) allow for fast, easy changes. Again, it all boils down to what you're going to photograph. Moving subjects can best be photographed with smooth

moving ball heads whereas stationary subjects might lend themselves to tripod heads with more precise control adjustment levers. (You can use ball heads for everything.)

Since film is the cheapest part of photography, don't be afraid to shoot a lot of it. I shoot slide film be-



©Tim Wright

cause it's what my clients prefer. It is very sharp compared to print film. If you are just learning how to use your camera shoot with slide film because it gives you a "what you see is what you get" results. When you make an exposure on slide film it is processed and what you look at under a loupe are the results of the exposure you selected. When you shoot print film the only way to see what your true exposures are, is to analyze the negatives. Whoever prints your print film corrects nearly all exposure mistakes during printing. Using slide film is the best way

to learn proper exposure. Don't forget to take notes as you make the exposures and compare them to the final results!

Now that you're learning about your subject and you've got the camera equipment to photograph it with, you'll want to take a look at the artistic elements involved in composing a photograph. Study wildlife images you see in books and magazines. Which ones do you like best and why? Learn rules of composition, like the "Rules of Thirds." Study the use of color—how some colors make your eye move into the photograph. Understand the psychology of keeping an animal's eyes in focus. There are numerous books on the market, which address these techniques and more.

Lastly, the key is patience! You will need patience for the actual process of photography and you will need patience in working with wild subjects. A wildlife photographer is not made over night. Unsuccessful days in the blind and hundreds of missed shots are all part of the process. Don't let it discourage you!

Wildlife photography is a fulfilling, lifelong, learning experience. As you become familiar with your equipment, your photo expertise will improve. And as you learn about wildlife you'll be able to capture its beauty in images that can be shared with family and friends, and possibly, even readers of magazines and books. And isn't that what it's all about, sharing your appreciation of the natural world? Enjoy and good luck! □



## Camp Out Using Foil Packets

Here's an easy way to prepare excellent meals either camping or outdoors at home. These foil packet recipes provide foolproof grilling without cleanup!

You need only a preheated, medium-high charcoal, wood or gas grill. Then simply follow these four steps:

1. Center ingredients on a sheet of heavy duty aluminum foil. Bring up sides of foil and double fold.
2. Double fold ends to form a packet, leaving room for heat circulation inside packet.
3. Grill for recommended time.
4. After cooking, open end of foil packet first to allow steam to escape. Then open top of foil packet.

### Menu

*Parmesan Baked Fish Packets*

*Savory Corn-On-The-Cob Packet*

*Yellow Squash, Tomato & Onion Packet*

*Easy Grilled S'mores*

### Parmesan Baked Fish Packets

- 4 sheets (12 x 18-inches each) heavy duty aluminum foil
- 4 (4 to 6 ounces each) bass, catfish, flounder or other fillets
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Cayenne pepper
- 2 medium zucchini, sliced
- ½ medium red bell pepper, cut in strips



Preheat grill to medium-high. Spray foil with nonstick cooking spray. Center one fish fillet on each sheet of heavy duty aluminum foil. Spread with mayonnaise. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and cayenne pepper. Top with vegetables. Follow packet directions. Repeat to make four packets. Grill 10 to 12 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Makes 4 servings.

### Savory Corn-On-The-Cob Packet

- 1 sheet (18x24-inches) heavy duty aluminum foil
- 4 ears corn-on-the-cob, husked
- ¼ cup margarine or butter, softened
- Seasoned salt
- Pepper
- 2 ice cubes

Preheat grill to medium-high. Center corn on sheet of heavy duty aluminum foil. Spread margarine on corn. Sprinkle with seasonings. Top with ice cubes. Follow packet directions. Grill, turning packet over once, 15 to 20 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

### Yellow Squash, Tomato & Onion Packet

- 1 sheet (18x24 inches) heavy duty aluminum foil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 medium yellow squash, cut in ¼-inch slices



- 4 large Roma tomatoes, quartered
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- Salt and pepper

Preheat grill to medium-high. Center onion on sheet of heavy duty aluminum foil. Top with yellow squash and tomatoes. Sprinkle with basil, salt and pepper. Follow packet directions. Grill 13 to 15 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

### Easy Grilled S'mores

- 4 sheets (8 x 12-inches) heavy duty aluminum foil
- 4 graham crackers, broken into halves
- 2 (1.55 ounces each) milk chocolate candy bars, divided in half crosswise
- 4 large marshmallows

Preheat grill to medium. For each S'more, top one graham cracker square with one candy bar half, one marshmallow and another graham cracker square. Repeat with remaining graham crackers, candy and marshmallows. Center one S'more on each sheet of heavy duty aluminum foil. Follow packet directions. Repeat to make four packets. Grill 4 to 5 minutes. Makes 4 servings. □

Recipes and photo courtesy Reynolds Metals Company.







# On The Water

by Jim Crosby, Region 4 Boater Education Coordinator

## Watercraft Sales: An Analysis of Sale Trends Since 1980

The 1999 U.S. pleasure boat market recorded its largest growth in over a decade, with smaller craft joining larger vessels to drive up new boat sales six percent, to 605,000 units, according to the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA). This represents a sales market value of \$23 billion.

Watercraft sales statistics for 1980-1999, compiled by NMMA, show outboard motorboats are still, by far, the most popular boat sold in the U.S. They peaked in 1988 with sales of 355,000 units, endured a large decline which bottomed-out in 1992. They have now come back to a 8.6 percent increase last year over the previous year with 233,900 units sold.

Sterndrive vessels come closest to outboards in sales volume. Their sales increased 9.5 percent last year over 1998, with 96,000 units sold. They peaked in 1988, as well, with sales of 148,000 units. They bottomed-out in 1991 and immediately started to grow steadily to their present sales level.

Personal watercraft (jet skis) are the only other type of recreational vessel to come close to the dominance of the outboard and sterndrive vessels in the U.S. market. They actually exceeded sterndrive sales records their second year on the market in 1992. In 1995 their sales peaked with 200,000 units sold. After coming on the market in 1991 with a robust beginning of 68,000 units sold, they grew by leaps and bounds, through their peak in

1995. Thereafter, they started a steady decline in sales, through their present record of 106,000 units sold in 1999. Although they out sold sterndrives in 1992 through the present, their total sales have not exceeded the sterndrive total sales in the U.S. market. They were the only type of watercraft to suffer a loss in sales in 1999, which was 8 percent.

with 72,300. The very next year their sales began a steady growth, which has continued through 1999, with a 9 percent growth recorded. They joined sterndrives with the largest growth recorded in 1999.

Sailboat sales peaked in 1981 with 77,100 units sold. They suffered a steady decline thereafter through a real low of 8,700 units sold in 1991.

Sales turned around in 1992 and have grown steadily since. Sales in 1999 showed a 6.9 percent growth over 1998, right along with the overall market increase.

During 1998, U.S. manufacturers exported \$674,802,000 worth of pleasure boats while \$884,713,000 was imported. That's a foreign trade deficit of \$209,911,000 in recreational boats.

Virginia is ranked 20th among the states in boat registrations with 232,409 on record in 1998. With 229,629 registered in 1997, that represents a growth in boat registrations of 9.8 percent for the year of 1998. Measured along with national marketing statistics, Virginia boat registration figures are growing more rapidly than the national average. □

*Author's Note: All of the above facts and figures were derived from statistics contained in a pamphlet entitled Boating 1999, Facts & Figures At A Glance, produced and distributed by the National Marine Manufacturers Association, Marketing Statistics Department, 200 East Randolph Drive, Suite 5100; Chicago, Illinois 60601-6528.*



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The third most popular watercraft sold in the U.S. market is the canoe/kayak. Between 1980 and 1999, their sales peaked in 1981 with 126,000 units sold. They suffered a steady decline in sales thereafter until they bottomed-out in 1991





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